

I Claim:

1. An apparatus for removing frangible members from a container, comprising:
  - a crushing assembly adapted for positioning inside the container, said crushing assembly comprising a means for breaking the frangible members into fragments; and
  - a guiding chute mounted in secure attachment with said crushing assembly for guiding the fragments toward a removal conduit.
2. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said crushing assembly comprises a drive unit, a gear assembly operationally connected to said drive unit, and a plurality of rotatable crushing strikers operationally connected to said gear assembly for imparting a breaking force on said frangible members.
3. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said gear assembly comprises a pair of gear wheels connected by a driven chain, and wherein said crushing strikers are connected to one of said gear wheels.
4. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said drive unit is adapted for connection to a power source.
5. The apparatus of Claim 2, further comprising a crushing assembly housing, said housing enclosing at least said crushing strikers.
6. The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein said housing is fixedly attached to said guiding chute, and wherein a guiding opening is defined by a lower portion of said guiding chute, said guiding opening being located adjacent to said crushing strikers.
7. The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein said crushing strikers are sized to facilitate movement of the fragments into said guiding opening.

8. The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein said guiding chute comprises upwardly extending sidewalls and an inclined bottom wall, a lower end of said bottom wall defining a portion of said guiding opening.
9. The apparatus of Claim 6, wherein said housing is provided with a means for suspending the crushing assembly inside said container.
10. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said guiding chute is sized and shaped for connection to a vacuum source.
11. An apparatus for unloading frangible packing members from an acid processing tank, comprising:  
a crushing assembly adapted for positioning inside the tank, said crushing assembly comprising a motor-driven means for breaking the packing members into fragments; and  
5 a guiding chute mounted in secure attachment with said crushing assembly for guiding the fragments toward a removal conduit, said crushing assembly comprising a plurality of rotatable strikers for imparting a breaking force on said packing members during rotation of said strikers.
12. The apparatus of Claim 11, wherein said crushing assembly further comprises a drive unit and a gear assembly operationally connected to said drive unit, and wherein said strikers are operationally connected to said gear assembly.
13. The apparatus of Claim 11, further comprising a crushing assembly housing, said housing enclosing said strikers and preventing the fragments from moving upwardly toward a drive unit.

14. The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said housing is fixedly attached to said guiding chute, and wherein a guiding opening is defined by a lower portion of said guiding chute, said guiding opening being located adjacent to said strikers.
15. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said strikers are sized to facilitate movement of the fragments into said guiding opening.
16. The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said housing is provided with a means for suspending the crushing assembly inside said tank.
17. A method of unloading ceramic packing from a processing tank, the method comprising the following steps:
  - providing a crushing assembly comprising a plurality of rotatable crushing strikers and a guiding chute;
  - lowering the crushing assembly into the processing tank and positioning said crushing strikers in contact with said ceramic packing;
  - providing a motor-driven unit for moving said crushing strikers;
  - causing rotation of said crushing strikers and imparting a crushing force on said ceramic packing, thereby breaking said ceramic packing into fragments; and
- 10 guiding said fragments into the guiding chute for removal from said processing tank.
18. The method of Claim 17, wherein said motor-driven unit comprises a pair of driving gear wheels, and wherein said crushing strikers are connected to one of said gear wheels.
19. The method of Claim 17, wherein said crushing assembly is provided with a housing mounted above said crushing strikers to prevent an upward escape of the fragments.
20. The method of Claim 17, wherein said guiding chute has an upper portion, said upper portion being sized and shaped for connection to a vacuum source.